



ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD

PRAIRIE SENTINEL

VOLUME 12

OPERATION HERSTORY:
MAJ. ELAINE NUSSBAUM CHRONICLES
HER TRIP ON ILLINOIS' FIRST ALL
WOMEN'S HONOR FLIGHT

FALL 2021

ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD PRAIRIE SENTINEL

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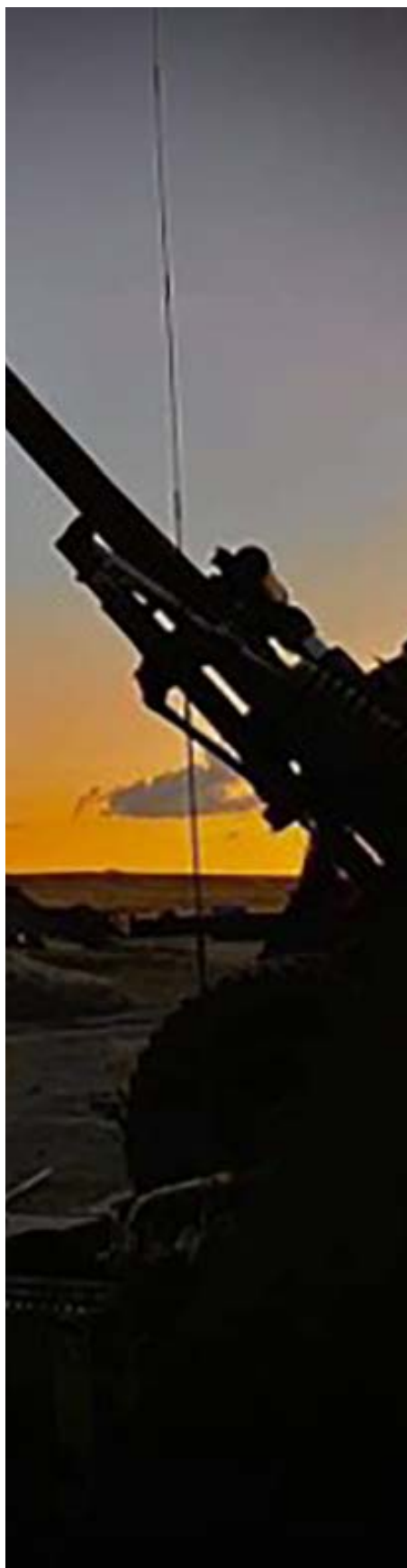
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Take it From the Top:

Senior Leader's Corner

Civil Support Response, the JTF-HQ and Dual Status Command

The Illinois National Guard performed extremely well in civil support missions as we responded to the pandemic as well as other emergencies over the last couple years. This is because we have the best of the best Soldiers and Airmen. These troops worked hard and were able to adapt and innovate as we solved problems on multiple different missions.

In addition, the Joint Task Force headquarters played a crucial role in the Illinois National Guard's success. This command and control node helped us adapt quickly and effectively to the sometimes changing needs of civil authorities at the tactical level allowing the ILNG's senior leadership to concentrate on operational and strategic issues.

The National Guard's Joint Task Force concept has its roots in the nation's response after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. National, state and local emergency planners identified several ways we could improve our responses to emergencies after 9-11. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security was established in 2002, combining 22 different federal departments and agencies into a unified, integrated Cabinet agency.

The new federal agency was tasked with integrating local, state and national capabilities into emergency response. This was the genesis of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). First released in March 2004, NIMS established a uniform set of processes and procedures that emergency responders at all levels of government use to conduct response operations.

This integrated approach also identified the need for a command and control element that could integrate the capabilities of the Illinois Army National Guard with the Illinois Air National and plug those capabilities smoothly into civilian responder efforts.



Brig. Gen. James Silvasy Chief of Staff, Illinois Air National Guard

In 2005, Brig. Gen. Mark Stanich, the commander of what was then the Army Guard's 404th Chemical Brigade, stood up the initial Illinois National Guard Joint Task Force integrating our Army and Air Guard elements. We continued to exercise and validate this concept through multiple interagency exercises.

Today's Joint Task Force headquarters was created in 2014 using elements of the 65th Troop Command (TC) and the 183d Air Operations Group (AOG). A working group identified all the required staff positions and those

positions were filled from within both units. Members were required to accomplish entry level Incident Command System (ICS) courses and select individuals based on rank and key leadership positions within the JTF HQ were assigned to more advanced schools. Quarterly training schedules were developed and over the next two years training was conducted at the 183d AOG facility in Springfield.

The final step was conducting a Capstone event to certify the new JTF HQ. Prairie Assurance 2015 was created for that purpose. This exercise had participation from all the key players including The Adjutant General's Joint Staff, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and the Civil Air Patrol; to name just a few. After this successful exercise, the Illinois National Guard had a scalable Joint Task Force headquarters manned, trained, and equipped to be used any time an incident required a larger command and control node than what is organic to the Illinois National Guard's Joint Staff.

I was the JTF Commander when the JTF HQ was activated for the floods of 2019. This operation required the JTF HQ to be used in its smallest form, consisting of eight personnel and I chose the staff positions that would support

the operation most efficiently. This proved to be effective. It allowed the Joint Staff to perform their normal duties while the JTF HQ took care of the task at hand.

The next civil support mission requiring activation of the JTF HQ occurred in 2020 for COVID testing, personal protective equipment distribution, the McCormick Place build out; and multiple other COVID-related missions and tasks. This time a more robust version of the JTF HQ was used - approximately 40 soldiers and Airmen.

I visited often and was truly impressed with the complexity of the mission and the ease that now retired Colonel Lee Wheeler and his staff were able to command and control this multi-faceted operation. While the JTF HQ was executing several different mission sets, TAG's Joint Staff worked at the operational and strategic levels knowing that day-to-day operations were in capable hands.

In 2021, I was appointed the Dual Status Commander for the statewide COVID-19 vaccination mission as the state accepted some 200 active-duty Soldiers with the 101st Airborne Division's 426th Brigade Support Battalion. These Soldiers helped vaccinate people in the City of Chicago.

The concept of the Dual Status Commander arose from lessons learned during the Hurricane Katrina response in 2005. It was found that federal military forces and the National Guard under state control were not well integrated because they served under separate command structures. A Dual Status Commander serves simultaneously in state status under the Governor and federal status under the President allowing that officer to command and integrate the efforts of both state and federal military forces.

It is a fairly new concept, first used in 2010. In Illinois, the concept was first used in 2012 during the NATO Summit in Chicago, which was designated a National Special Security Event.

Dual Status Commanders were used throughout the United States during the pandemic and assisted greatly in ensuring that military forces were all working together and their efforts were well integrated.

In Illinois, a few of the more than 1,700 National Guard members who were already conducting vaccination operations reported to the United Center for a couple days to assist the active duty forces, who at first were barred from

immunizing 12-15-year-olds. It was a good example of the National Guard and federal forces working together to solve a problem.

The introduction of active duty forces within the state added an additional level of complexity, but it went very smoothly thanks to the concepts introduced by NIMS and improved with Dual Status Command and the Joint Task Force.

Once again we used the full complement of JTF HQ positions. This operation differed slightly because I elected to split the JTF HQ staff having the majority in Springfield under the leadership of Col. Nick Babiak, and a smaller staff with me in Chicago. We were able to conduct vaccination operations that covered the entire state, using Title 32 Guardsmen statewide, and Title 10 Soldiers at the United Center - all under one command structure.

Both active duty and National Guard staffs worked extremely well together and were led by outstanding T10 and T32 deputies as we followed the JTF/ Dual Status Command doctrinal organization. This big-scale operation ended with more than two million Illinoisans being vaccinated by the ILNG and our U.S. Army brothers and sisters. Once again, having a highly effective DSC/JTF HQ executing day-to-day operations allowed The Adjutant General of Illinois and Commander of the Illinois National Guard, Major General Rich Neely, and his staff to concentrate on the state's bigger picture during pandemic operations.

The creators of the ILNG JTF HQ have since retired, but their legacy - this innovative concept - lives strong in our state. It has been repeatedly tested with continued success. The last 18 months of civil support response from the ILNG has been historic. We have the best response organization National Guard-wide.

I thank all the Soldiers and Airmen who have been a part of COVID support. You have saved countless lives. A special thanks to all the members of the Joint Task Force headquarters and to The Adjutant General of Illinois, who continues to fully support this concept. Whatever the future brings our way, the Illinois National Guard will be ready to protect our state like no other.

HIGHLIGHTING DIVERSITY

OPERATION HERSTORY

Maj. Elaine Nussbaum chronicles her experience on Illinois' first all-women's Honor Flight.



By Maj. Elaine Nussbaum, Illinois Army National Guard

WASHINGTON, D.C. –The first time I visited the Military Women's Memorial was almost 20 years ago. I was at Fort Eustis, Virginia for my Transportation Officer Basic Course, and I was just three years into my Army National Guard career.

Friends were still surprised and amused that I had joined the military. I had not yet deployed. I had not yet lost brothers- and sisters-in-arms. I had barely begun to really build the bonds of military camaraderie. I had not yet served as a company commander or advised a commander as a member of a staff.

I was young, and I had so much to learn.

On Oct. 6, I had the opportunity to help escort 93 women veterans to Washington, D.C., as part of a special Honor Flight called Operation HerStory. After two decades, I would once again see the Military Women's Memorial, this time with fellow veterans.

The 93 veterans - 84 served in Vietnam, seven from the Korean War, and two World War II veterans - began lining up in the baggage claim area of Midway at 4 a.m. There they checked in and verified any special health and mobility

requirements.

Guardians and other "ground crew" volunteers assisted. As a Logistics officer, I was impressed. It was organized and seamless. At Midway I met Kris Artz, a Korean War-era veteran who joined the Women's Air Force (WAF) in 1954. She was trained as a statistician and worked at Strategic Air Command and Offutt Air Force Base auditing information reports before submitting them to the Pentagon. The line moved a little, then stopped, then moved a little, and stopped.

"Hurry up and wait!" she said. She was delighted to discover that today's military still uses the phrase.

I met Vietnam-era veterans Kathy Rutledge and Rosemary Danaher at "camp" - the staging area at the end of in-processing. I served as the Guardian and companion for Kathy, an Army personnel clerk during the war. Rosemary was an Air Force physical therapist. Both were from Bloomington, my hometown. They already knew each other from their involvement in local veterans' organizations. As we moved through security and to the gate, local law enforcement,

emergency responders, and representatives of other local organizations wished the women well with music, salutes, waves, and color guard presentations. At the gate, the women bonded as they enjoyed patriotic music.

"It's wonderful to have women recognized for all the things they did that were sometimes behind the scenes or sometimes just ignored," Carol Ann Macola, a Vietnam-era Military Police Soldier told a local CBS reporter.

Seated next to me on the flight from Chicago were Judith Doran and Peggy Hayes, both Vietnam veterans. Judith was an Air Force veterinary technician and Peggy was an Army administrative clerk. Both were excited to be on the flight and especially to visit the Military Women's Memorial. Judith presented her card as a charter member of the memorial, and clapped as we landed at Washington Dulles Airport. A fire engine doused the sides of the aircraft in a "water cannon salute." The women cheered and applauded.

The women were enthusiastically greeted by local law enforcement, emergency responders, and other volunteers upon entering the terminal. Guardians from the Washington, D.C. area met their veterans and merged seamlessly into the group. After loading the buses, we pulled away from the curb to the sound of more cheers and a color guard presentation. A police escort – motorcycles and squad cars with lights flashing and sirens wailing – helped us move to our first stop – the Military Women's

Memorial.



Kathy Rutledge and a few others were there when the memorial was dedicated on October 18, 1997, but many of the women had never seen the memorial dedicated to their service, the military service of more than three million women from the American Revolution until today.

They eagerly explored the grounds and exhibits, and snapped photos with their sisters-in-arms. Speakers at the indoor luncheon included Desert Storm veteran retired Army Lt. Col. Jill Henry, the Illinois representative to the Military Women's Memorial. Vietnam War veteran retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Wilma Vaught, who initiated the creation of the Military Women's Memorial, also spoke. World War II Women's Army Corps veterans



99-year-old Bette Horstman and 104-year-old Josephine Bogdanich were recognized as Military Women's Memorial "Living Legends." During the war, Bette served as a physical therapist stationed in Hawaii and Saipan and Josephine served as teletypist and mailroom clerk. One veteran from the group sang the

National Anthem and another played Taps on her bugle to conclude the ceremony.

At Arlington National Cemetery's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the veterans watched the changing of the guard ceremony in respectful silence, marveling at the precision and discipline required of those in uniform assigned to this very solemn duty.

The women took their time admiring the

view of the National Mall, looking from the Lincoln Memorial toward the Washington Monument and U.S. Capitol. They moved past the Korean War Memorial with its larger-than-life Soldiers on patrol and its etched images of war, quietly taking it all in. They examined the polished black surface of the Vietnam War Memorial, and paused near the statue of the Three Soldiers.

But they paused longest at the Vietnam Women's Memorial, just north of the Reflecting Pool.

Perhaps the bronze statue of three women caring for a fallen Soldier brought forth memories long obscured by civilian careers and time as mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and sisters – memories of when they served as caregivers and warriors. Perhaps they thought about this recognition after so many years of people assuming they were a veteran's wife or they belonged to a veteran's organization auxiliary. Perhaps they just thought of their time as Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, or Marines – part of a team willing to sacrifice their lives working toward something bigger than themselves. Or perhaps they thought of the military brothers and sisters they lost. I didn't ask – these thoughts and memories were theirs – and this time together was sharing. There was no need for words.

The last stop was the World War II Memorial. Many snapped photos by the Illinois pillar and of the memorial stars, the fountains, the theater medallions... others followed the memorial's depiction of events in this epic struggle.

Several took a group photograph under

a quote from Col. Oveta Culp Hobby, the organizer and first commander of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC).

"Women who stepped up were measured as citizens of the nation, not as women... This was a people's war, and everyone was in it," Col. Hobby said.

Perhaps this quote appealed to them as service members in general, but especially as woman veterans. They proved their abilities, character, toughness, strength, and resilience through hard work and dedication, regardless of gender. This was their day to celebrate those efforts.

As we boarded the bus back to Dulles, I again considered that women service members today should thank these women – these friendly, but

tough, venerable ladies – for the opportunities we enjoy in the military today.

Each veteran was recognized by name, thanked her for her service, and presented

with an Operation HerStory challenge coin in commemoration of her Day of Honor.

On the flight back to Chicago, I sat between Vietnam-era veterans Lisa Mattingly and Patricia Tiner. Lisa served in the Army's Military Police and Patricia was an Air Force air traffic controller and warning intercept technician. Despite the late hour, the women chatted energetically about their favorite parts of the day during the return flight. Several veterans exchanged contact information and shared photographs.

Suddenly an Honor Flight Chicago staff member announced "Mail Call!" Volunteers called out names and began passing out large manila envelopes to the veterans. The



envelopes were stuffed with artwork, cards, and letters from family, friends, co-workers, school children, women's groups, military organizations, Chicago sports teams, and various other supporters including actor Gary Sinise.

"I don't even know how some of these people knew about this!" Patricia said. Lisa just hugged her envelope. "I'm going to save these and read them tomorrow," she said. Kathy and other women wiped their eyes and smiled through joyful tears as they looked through the contents of their envelopes.

As we began our descent, someone began singing "God Bless America" and we all joined in. Everyone cheered and clapped as the plane touched down and the veterans were again treated to a water cannon salute as we taxied closer to the arrival gate. The crew thanked each veteran for her service and the women made their way into the terminal.

We could immediately hear clapping and cheering. Young Sailors from Great Lakes Naval Base stepped forward to help each veteran with her bag and offered an arm to escort her through the airport. The cacophony was overwhelming as the women took an elevator down to the baggage claim area and proceeded through a cheering crowd gathered to welcome them home.

"I just can't believe it! Look how many people are here!" I heard one veteran say repeatedly. As we reached the "discharge" point near baggage claim, the Sailors shook the hands of the women veterans and thanked them for their service. Many received hugs and took photographs with the women.

"It's been a long time since a young man took my bag and offered me his arm!" said Kathy

with a chuckle.

Several of the veterans waited together for a hotel shuttle. Korean War-era veteran Teresa Cole, an Air Force Morse Code instructor, sat with a bundle of flowers on her lap. I asked her who gave them to her.

She looked up at me, still clearly surprised. "I don't know! She just gave them to me and said 'Welcome home!' Can you believe it?" she said.

Everyone was all smiles after her Day of Honor. This was certainly a day these women veterans will never forget.

Visiting the Military Women's Memorial in 2021 with 93 fellow women veterans sparked many of my own memories and rekindled my enthusiasm for the Profession of Arms. These courageous women reminded me that each of us has something to offer, to bring to the table, to better the organization.

It was while these 93 women veterans posed for their official group picture that I was most humbled. I looked across the rows of

women veterans in front of the Military Women's Memorial and saw years of experience, a mountain of knowledge, and a wide variety of skillsets. I saw pride, joy, and camaraderie. I thought of the historic moments witnessed by these women and their many accomplishments which, in compilation, blazed a trail for the thousands of women

who have served in the U.S. military over the last 80 years.

I felt tears of pride leak down my cheeks as I stood in awe of these amazing women, my sisters-in-arms.

For more information about Operation HerStory or Honor Flights visit <https://operationherstory.org/> or <https://www.honorflightchicago.org/>



Illinois Governor signs 7 pieces of legislature aimed at helping vets

Courtesy of Gov. JB Pritzker's Press Office

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. –Governor JB Pritzker was joined by Maj. Gen. Rich Neely, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard, Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) Acting Director Terry Prince, legislators, and advocates, Aug. 15 at the Illinois Military Academy as he signed seven pieces of legislation that aim to improve the lives of Illinois' service members and veterans and honor their service to their state and nation.



"Our military men and women, our veterans, and their families deserve our full support," said Governor JB Pritzker. "I am proud to improve our service to our active military members, veterans, and their families by signing seven bills that address overlooked challenges they face during and after their service. Because one truth will always persist: it is our responsibility to serve our heroes as they have served us. Today, we have taken seven more steps to live up to their legacy."

Among the bills signed into law was Senate Bill 505, a bill that amends the Illinois Military Code, allowing family members or next of kin to be presented with a state flag in the event



a member of the Illinois National Guard dies while on state active duty or in training status under the authority of the Governor.

"The National Guard has a unique dual-mission serving both under the State of Illinois as well as the United States of America," said Neely. "Many of the dangers our Illinois National Guard service members face are under the authority of the Governor and under the banner of the State of Illinois. It is fitting that a National Guard member killed in the line of duty be appropriately honored by the State of Illinois."

The Illinois National Guard has served both in Illinois and out of state under the Governor's authority including responses to COVID-19, floods, wildfires, hurricanes and other incidents. In addition, much of the Guard's military training is conducted under the Governor's authority.

"The selfless men and women of the Illinois National Guard have been front and center to protect us whenever we needed them, most recently during the pandemic," said State Representative Joyce Mason (D – Gurnee). "This bill makes sure that whenever one of our National Guard troops passes, their loved ones know that every citizen of the state appreciates their service by presenting them with an Illinois State flag."

SB 505 is effective January 1, 2022.



Going to California

126 Security Forces Squadron Annual Training at San Luis Obispo, California

By Tech. Sgt. Aaron Rodriguez, 126th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs





Airmen of the 126th Security Forces Squadron based at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, spent their annual training in early August in San Luis Obispo, California. The airmen trained on a variety of skills including room clearing, automatic weapons training, and individual weapons training.



ASG-Poland hosts first Poland executive security forum

By Capt. DeLancie Horton, ASG-Poland Public Affairs

POZNAN, Poland – Illinois Army National Guard Col. Jorge Fonseca, commander of Area Support Group - Poland, hosted the First Executive Security Forum July 26-27, 2021 at Poland's 31st Tactical Air Base Krzesiny, in Poznan, Poland. Leaders from the U.S. Embassy, U.S. European Command, U.S. Army Europe, and the U.S. Army Area Support Group Poland (ASG-P) met with their Polish counterparts to discuss mutually beneficial security agreements.

specific conversations helped create a better understanding of the security agreements already in place, and focused on proposed changes that could potentially yield mutually beneficial results.

Attendees also participated in a counter-small unmanned aircraft systems demonstration offered by the U.S. Air Force. The security forum content, broken down and presented over several days, fostered a deeper understanding of security cooperation within



The Polish leadership offered the use of the 31st Tactical Air Base to enable bi-lateral security discussions. The Forum included topics encompassing the U.S. and Polish enhanced defense cooperation agreement, and provided a synchronized effort to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) from the current implementation arrangement between both countries; specific to security and counter intelligence. The force protection

the established partnership between the U.S. and Poland.



For the U.S. forces in attendance, the forum continued throughout the week, culminating at the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, Poland where proposed changes were documented that could lead to a security MOU between the nations.

Chaplain retires after more than 23 years of service

By Maj. Kira Tierney, Illinois National Guard Equal Opportunity Office



SPRINGFIELD, ILL. – Friends and colleagues gathered to celebrate the retirement of Chaplain (Maj.) Jenny Nielson at the Illinois Military Academy in Springfield, Illinois in early August.

Chaplain Nielson retired after more than 23 years of service to her faith and her country.

During her retirement ceremony, Chaplain Nielsen challenged her

friends and colleagues.

“I challenge you to not be so distracted by the issues, that you lose sight of the people within the issue. I challenge you to offer love and kindness even when it’s uncomfortable because it is his kindness that leads up to repentance (Romans 2:4). I challenge you to stay engaged and stay relational because avoiding and

glossing over an issue only makes it bigger and harder to manage later.”

In the Illinois Army National Guard, Chaplain Nielsen served as a chaplain with Joint Force Headquarters, the 404th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, as well as battalion chaplain for the 33rd Military Police Battalion, the 44th Chemical Battalion, 108th Special Troops Battalion, and the 634th Brigade Support



Battalion.

She enlisted in the Iowa Army National Guard as a junior in high school. She then graduated from Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa in 2005 with a Corporate Communications major. In 2009 she graduated from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois with her Master of Divinity. She is an ordained pastor with Chaplaincy of Full Gospel Churches based in Cedar Hill, Texas.

Chaplain Nielsen previously served as a 92G Culinary Specialist and 88M Motor Transportation Operator. She deployed twice to Kuwait, the first in 2003 as a truck driver

with 1168 Transportation Company from the Iowa Army National Guard, and the second as a chaplain in 2014 with 108th Special Troops Battalion from Illinois Army National Guard.

Her previous full-time military positions included Wounded Warrior and Reintegration Chaplain, Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program Manager, and

Casualty Operations Branch Manager.

Chaplain Nielsen remains in Springfield working for a non-profit ministry for at-risk youth and families in crisis using equine assistance called Refuge Ranch.



WE BAND OF BROTHERS



Illinois National Guard helps commemorate Purple Heart Day 2021

By Sgt. 1st Class Bryan Spreitzer, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs



Brig. Gen. Justin Osberg of Geneva, Illinois, Deputy Assistant Adjutant General - Army, Illinois National Guard, joined veterans, members of LaFore Lock Post VFW 755 and the Military Order of the Purple Heart Auxiliary at Springfield's Oak Ridge Cemetery to commemorate Purple Heart Day. Purple Heart Day is dedicated to honoring our nation's many military personnel and service members who have made such important sacrifices for our country.



Osberg was joined in speaking by U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis, representing Illinois' 13th Congressional District, and Terry Price, Acting Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs. Osberg and Davis placed a memorial wreath to close the ceremony.



"Doc" Vaughn retires after more than 30 years of service

By Sgt. 1st Class Bryan Spreitzer, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs



SPRINGFIELD, ILL. – Friends, family and colleagues gathered at the Illinois Military Academy to celebrate Col. Eric Vaughn's career Aug. 7, 2020. Vaughn served in many roles in the Air Force throughout his career and retired after serving as the State Surgeon for the Illinois Air National Guard.

Maj. Gen. Pete Nezamis, Assistant Adjutant General - Air, Illinois National Guard,



presented Vaughn with the Legion of Merit and the Illinois Medal of Merit for his years of service.

Vaughn enlisted in the Missouri Air National Guard's 131st Fighter Wing while studying medicine at Washington University. During his fourth year of medical school, Vaughn completed Air Force Aerospace Medicine Training



and graduated as a physician and Flight Surgeon in the Air Force.

After completing his residency, Vaughn moved to Chicago and transferred to the Illinois Air National Guard where he served in many roles including Chief of Aerospace Medicine, Chief of Professional Services and as Interim Hospital Commander.



Vaughn has deployed multiple times both at home and overseas, including tours in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. In 2015, Vaughn became as the Illinois Air National Guard State Surgeon.

GASSED UP

126 Air Refueling Wing heads to Poland for training with partners

By Master Sgt. Brian Ellison, 126th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

Illinois' 126th Air Refueling Wing traveled to Podwiz, Poland in August for Aviation Detachment Rotation 21-3, where they conducted aerial refueling operations with Polish F-16 Falcons. ADR 21-3 is just one of many exercises that the Illinois National Guard and Republic of Poland have conducted together during their nearly 30-year partnership. Participation in training events like Aviation Detachment Rotation enhances professional relationships and improves overall coordination with allies and partner militaries during times of crisis.



Air Force Chief of Staff visits Peoria Air National Guard Base

By Staff Sgt. Joseph Pagan, 182nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

PEORIA, Ill. – The highest ranking member of the U.S. Air Force made a surprise visit to the Peoria Air National Guard Base in Illinois Tuesday, Aug. 17.

Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr., hosted an all-call with the 182nd Airlift Wing to take questions and discuss maintaining air superiority against U.S. adversaries.

“From 1944 to 1984, we were building a fighter every 2.5 years,” the general said. “Since 1984, we’ve built about four. If we are going to win, we have to change.”

Brown said he sees Robert Emerson Bell’s art piece *Wings Through Time* every day he walks into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and it reminds him that Air Force advancements have slowed down over the decades. The artwork depicts airpower buildups and drawdowns up to, during and after conflicts.

“We need to know who we are competing against,” Brown said. “They have been accelerating. We have not.”

Brown affirmed that if Airmen are to stay competitive in the 21st century, the service has to prioritize its people and set them up for success.

“We need to determine where we want to be, not just today, but 10, 15 and 20 years from now,” he said. “To ensure those that come behind us are set up for success.”

The general then took the time to recognize the successes of three Peoria Airmen by coining them for their contributions to the Air National Guard’s federal and state missions.

Master Sgt. Cody Canfield, an operations superintendent with the 169th Air Support Operations Squadron, was recognized for his significant contributions to the Tactical Air

Control Party career field and for his efforts in the fight against extremism, said Chief Master Sgt. Douglas Turner, the command chief of the 182nd Airlift Wing.

“Master Sgt. Canfield has deployed to Syria under [Joint Special Operations Command] to defeat Da’esh in their own backyard,” said Turner. “He is also the lead for the Air Force Special Warfare for the lethality working group.”

Also recognized was Master Sgt. Stacey Hovey, a medical administration specialist with Detachment 1, 182nd Medical Group. She played a pivotal role

in the initial set up of a mass vaccination site while maintaining her home unit’s readiness, said Turner.

Turner said as Hovey was moved to assist vaccination operations at the intermediate care level geographically covering over 43 percent of Illinois, she also maintained her unit’s readiness at 79 percent.

Lastly recognized was Tech. Sgt. Annie Picken of 264th Combat Communication Squadron. She exemplified extraordinary performance as a Guardsman to both the local community and military operations abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic, said Turner.

Picken contributed to domestic operations by setting up a community-based COVID-19 testing site in Rockford, Illinois, prior to deploying to Niger, Africa, for six months as a cyber system operator.

Brown complemented the wing’s history of high performance and its contributions to the warfight and COVID-19 pandemic. He also reiterated that Air Force advancements and taking care of Airmen are paramount for continuing to stay competitive in the global arena and to continue being the world’s greatest air force.

“That’s why the mission is to fly, fight and win,” said Brown. “Not sometimes in some places. It’s anytime, anywhere our nation calls.”



Illinois welcomes 26 new 2nd Lieutenants to the ILARNG

By Lt. Col. Brad Leighton, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD, ILL. –

Thirty Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers graduated from the 129th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) Officer Candidate School on Aug. 22, fulfilling the leadership and military education requirements to be commissioned as U.S. Army officers. Of these Soldiers, 26 were commissioned as Second Lieutenants in the Illinois Army National Guard and U.S. Army. Four graduates of the program decided to “hip-pocket” their commissions and seek federal recognition as officers at a later date.

The Illinois National Guard’s Officer Candidate School transforms enlisted noncommissioned officers and qualified civilians into U.S. Army officers. The future leaders complete more than 661 hours of classroom and field instruction, must meet the commissioning standards of the U.S. Army and be examined, and approved by a federal recognition board. Two OCS classes graduated Aug. 22, Class 65-20 and Class 66-21. The ceremony was held at the Hoogland Center for the Arts in Springfield, Illinois.

The newly commissioned second lieutenants are 2nd Lt. Timothy Eychner of Chicago; 2nd Lt. Christian Garcia of Chicago; 2nd Lt. Jason Grover of Chicago; 2nd Lt. Patrick LeBlanc of Glen Carbon; 2nd Lt. Matthew Lodwich of Palos Park; 2nd Lt. Eduardo Rodriguez of Elgin; 2nd Lt. Carlos Romero of Springfield;

2nd Lt. Connor Rutherford of Macomb; 2nd Lt. Arlene Santiago of Wisconsin; 2nd Lt. Daniel Chamblin of O’Fallon; 2nd Lt. Joshua Furbeck of Auburn; 2nd Lt. Christopher Garibay of Chicago; 2nd Lt. Adrian Hernandez of South Elgin; 2nd Lt. Angel Hernandez Rendon of Chicago; 2nd Lt. Spencer Kiesewetter of



Farmington; 2nd Lt. Michael Koenig of Glen Ellyn; 2nd Lt. Uri Kuyoro of Country Club Hills; 2nd Lt. Devin Luton of Carbondale; 2nd Lt. Adrian Martinez of Northlake; 2nd Lt. Ryan McKennedy of Chatham; 2nd Lt. Brady Middleton of Chicago; 2nd Lt. Giovanni Ortega of Chicago; 2nd Lt. Christopher Peters of Highland; 2nd Lt. Hector Rios

of Aurora; 2nd Lt. Vincent Thomas of Dunlap; 2nd Lt. Brandon Urquidi of Plainfield

Graduates choosing to “hip-pocket” their

commissions and seek federal recognition as Army Officers at a later date are Timothy Jefferson of Mattoon; Jodainey Johnson of Skokie; Justin Wise of Oswego and Seth Knopp of Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

Justin Wise was awarded the Erickson Award as the Distinguished Honor Graduate of Class 65-20. 2nd Lt. Devin Luton was awarded

the Erickson Award as the Distinguished Honor Graduate of Class 66-21. The other honor graduates included 2nd Lt. Connor



Rutherford, 2nd Lt. Timothy Eychner, 2nd Lt. Joshua Furbeck and 2nd Lt. Adrian Martinez. 2nd Lt. Jodainey Johnson, Timothy Jefferson, 2nd Lt. Connor Rutherford, 2nd Lt. Arlene Santiago, and 2nd Lt. Devin Luton of won honors for their leadership scores and Justin Wise and Joshua Furbeck on honors for their academic scores.



Not quite finished yet:

Master Sgt. Donald Siltman extends his 38-year career

By Staff Sgt. Robert Adams, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – It was the year of Fraggie Rock. Cabbage Patch Kids were the rage. News of the Grenada invasion could be heard on your Boom Box. Valley Girl and The Big Chill were playing at the drive-in movies.

And hair? The bigger, the better! Except for Donald Siltman. He joined the Army – and got a haircut.

Master Sgt. Donald Siltman has been in the Army for 38 years, longer than most troops have been alive. But the wage leader for automotive at the Combined Support Maintenance Shop on Camp Lincoln in Springfield isn't done yet.

On August 20, Siltman re-enlisted in front of colleagues, family and friends at the Illinois State Military Museum. Although he's been in the Illinois Army National Guard since 1983, he's no museum piece.

"If it wasn't for these kinds of people who showed today for my re-enlistment, I would have been retired already," Siltman said. "It just shows me I'm important to what's going on in the Illinois Army National Guard."

When Siltman was a boy playing with his Hot Wheels, he already knew what he wanted to be when he grew up. "I wanted to be a Soldier and



a mechanic. I'm both of those and I like doing it."

Siltman said his officers allow him the space he needs to do what he is good at and mentor younger Soldiers. "The people showing up to Master Sgt. Siltman's ceremony today just shows the amount of

dedication he has to not only the Army, but also the CSMS," said Capt. Andrew Trine, the Combined Support Maintenance Shop superintendent. "It also shows how valuable of an asset he is with mentoring young Soldiers."

"He is a staple for the Illinois National Guard maintenance community," Trine said. While he might have a few gray hairs, Siltman still keeps ahead of his troops. "He has always been one to lead from the front. He is always willing to share his knowledge with everybody," Trine said.

Not only can Siltman teach his troops about engines, struts and brakes - he can tell them about his favorite Atari game or the famous bout between Marvelous Marvin Hagler and Roberto Duran. It will be a bit more time before Siltman



says "No mas" to the Illinois Army National Guard.

Marseilles based unit honored at Army-level for supply excellence

By Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. –Company B, 766th Brigade Engineer Battalion (BEB), based in Marseilles, Illinois, was named runner up in the Army National Guard Company Level 1 category of the Chief of Staff, Army Supply Excellence Award (SEA) program for fiscal year 2020.

Company B took top honors in the Illinois Army National Guard's competition before competing in the national level competition.

"The key to being so successful in this competition was the combination of two things," said Capt. Jacob Brue, of Petersburg, Illinois, Commander, Company B. "We have a very strong and determined full time unit staff and motivated, task-oriented Soldiers."

Brue said the full time unit staff worked tirelessly at process improvement and organization, which ensured efficiency and promoted innovation within the supply function. He explained the traditional Soldiers came to drill motivated to conduct training as well as support and enact the policies and procedures that were put in place by the full time unit staff.

"Without the improved processes we would not have competed effectively and without the buy in and execution from the Soldiers, the processes would've just been good ideas, not reality," he said. "Overall, I think this reflects the great strengths and unity we have at Company B. We are one team moving to complete common goals and, I guess in a more simplistic way, that is our key to success."

Staff Sgt. Jessica Stirens, of Grand Ridge, Illinois, who was Company B's supply noncommissioned officer during the awards process agreed.

"We could've had a million great ideas, but without the willingness to help from the entire company, this would have just been ideas," she said. "But we wouldn't have had anything tangible to show the evaluation team."



Stirens said the process of submitting the competition packet began in June 2020, with the packet being fine-tuned at each level of the competition. From the start of the process to final notification of the Department of the Army-level results, the process took nearly eight months.

"It took about 10 days to put together the original packet for the state's endorsement," Stirens said.

"Once the endorsement came, our team worked very hard to make it even better before the final product was due to the regional board."

When the unit was notified they were moving from phase one of the National board to phase two, the team had to refine the packet, providing more detailed information in a smaller packet, as well as a video interview with sub-hand receipt holders, the supply room team and a virtual walk

through of the supply room, Stirens noted.

"We also had a virtual evaluation with the SEA evaluation team and had to submit a PowerPoint project as well," she said.

Stirens said the evaluation team provides a detailed list of what they are seeking in each packet and the ILARNG's state logistics staff provided suggestions on how to make the packet as professional as possible and easy to navigate.

"The initial packet was well over 800 pages when it was complete, so making sure it was easy for the evaluators to search through was something small that was able to set it apart from the rest," she said.

Stirens said she believes this is the first time Company B has competed in the SEA competition, but she hopes it won't be the last.

Since Stirens has stepped into the role of Company B's

training NCO, and there's a new supply NCO on board.

"Sgt. Matthew Cooper is doing great things to build on our supply procedures which were already in place," she said.

The SEA originated in November 1984 to recognize excellence in supply operations at both unit and organizational levels. This award measures logistical readiness and supply effectiveness and has four different levels of competition that encompass all echelons of command.

Bloomington Soldier retires after 31 years of service

By Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. –After more than 34 years of military service, including 31 years in the Illinois Army National Guard, Sgt. 1st Class Charles Berry, of Bloomington, Illinois, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 44th Chemical Battalion, retired in a brief ceremony Aug. 27 at the Normal Readiness Center, Normal, Illinois.



Berry enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1987, serving on active duty as a cannon crewman in New Jersey and Germany, before enlisting in the Illinois Army National Guard in 1990. In the past 31 years, Berry has served in 2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery Regiment and the 1244th Transportation Company, based in North Riverside, Illinois, before transferring to the 44th Chemical Battalion in Normal.

"I'm not big on accolades," Berry told friends and family gathered for his retirement luncheon. "I do what I need to do to take care of Soldiers. It's been a crazy ride."

Berry said his plan in 1987 was to finish his enlistment and get out.

"Life intervened and here I am, 34 years later," he said.

Soldiers who served with Berry describe him as

someone with a wealth of knowledge who takes care of his Soldiers.

"I've only served with Sgt. 1st Class Berry for about two years," said Maj. Lance Frail, of Sherman, Illinois, the 44th Chemical Battalion's Officer in Charge. "But I learned a lot in those two years."

The unit's first sergeant, 1st Sgt. Zachary MacGrath, of Hudson, Illinois, said Berry's retirement is a huge loss for the Illinois Army National Guard.



"The Illinois National Guard is losing a huge asset with Sgt. 1st Class Berry's retirement," said MacGrath. "I've seen him come in as early as 4 a.m. and even travel across the state to help Soldiers."

Berry deployed overseas on multiple deployments, including to Iraq with the 1244th Transportation Company from 2010-2011.

Berry was presented with a Meritorious Service Medal in recognition of his 34 years of service and loyalty to the Illinois Army National Guard.



OPERATION ALLIES

WELCOME

Courtesy of Airman 1st Class Thomas Cox, 152nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

A C-130H and crew from Illinois' 182nd Airlift wing traveled to Pennsylvania to support Operation Allies Welcome, September 11, 2021. The Airmen transported Afghan families arriving at the Philadelphia International Airport to Camp Atterbury, Indiana for further processing and assistance from the State Department.





CLOSING THE BOOKS

Col. Melissa Beauman, USPFO for Illinois, retires after more than 30 years of service

By Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs



SPRINGFIELD, ILL. -More than 30 years after enlisting in the U.S. Army as a way to earn college benefits, Illinois Army National Guard (ILARNG) Col. Melissa Beauman, of Glenarm, Illinois, the U.S. Property and Fiscal Officer for Illinois, will retire Dec. 31.

"It's been a great and very rewarding career," Beauman said. "I wouldn't go back and change anything about it."

Beauman will step down as the USPFO of Illinois Oct. 1 when Col. Brian Creech, of Petersburg, Illinois, assumes duties as the USPFO of Illinois. Beauman will transfer to a temporary position until her retirement at the end of the year.

"I have always said I would retire after my term as the USPFO ends," she said.

After graduating from high school in 1988, Beauman enlisted in the U.S. Army as a supply clerk, serving four years on active duty, including a deployment in 1991 during Desert Storm with Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery Regiment. Following her active service, Beauman joined the Illinois Army National Guard as a traditional Guardsman.

"After I got out of the Army, I attended college fulltime for a couple of years before being hired for a federal technician position in 1995," she said. "In 2001, I accepted an Active Guard and Reserve position."

In 1997, Beauman was commissioned as an ordnance officer through the Illinois Army National Guard Officer Candidate School.



"I chose ordnance because I wanted to be within the logistics field and in the maintenance company," said Beauman.

During her service in the ILARNG,

Beauman has served in a variety of command and staff positions, including, 65th Transportation Battalion Personnel Officer, Inspector General Chief of Investigations, 1144th Transportation Battalion Executive Officer, 65th Troop Command Officer in Charge, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, and Deputy USPFO.

While Beauman has achieved much in her 32 year career, she challenges herself to learn at least one new piece of information in each position she's held.

"I have always strived to learn something

new in each position I've held," she said. "I don't place any one achievement above the others, but I do try to gain more knowledge with each assignment."

Maj. Gen. Mark Jackson, of Frankfort,

Illinois, Deputy Commanding General - Operations, First Army, who met Beauman in 2009 when he became the Commander of the 65th TC, describes her as a great leader who is always seeking knowledge.



"When Colonel Beauman became the 65th's Officer in Charge, she was eager to learn her duties," Jackson said. "She is a great leader who inspires and motivates Soldiers to be their best."

Jackson said during that time, the Illinois National Guard stood up Joint Task Force - South, a joint mission between the 65th and the 183rd Wing in Springfield that focused on domestic operations. The units worked three missions together - the 2009 winter storm, the G-8 meeting and the NATO Summit.

The two most recently worked together when Jackson served as the Director of the Joint Staff and was

activated in early 2020 for the state's COVID-19 response operations.

"I worked with her during the state's COVID-19 response operations as the director of the Joint Staff," he

said. "She is a consummate professional."

Fellow-USPFO, Col. Terry Ommen, of South Dakota, first met Beauman at a contracting workshop conducted at the National Postal Services Training Center in Norman, Oklahoma in 2016. He said Beauman is highly respected throughout the USPFO community.

"She has served as the Chair of the Installation Logistics Advisory Committee and also the USPFO Liaison to the Executive Advisory Group for Logistics Excellence Committee," Ommen said. "Colonel Beauman has been instrumental in working through and resolving a number of issues relevant to the USPFO community."

Ommen said during her tenure as the USPFO of Illinois, Beauman served on the USPFO Education Committee as one of the leads for planning and conducting the USPFO Logistics



Course, which provides new USPFOs with an understanding of critical topics, areas of responsibility, related to both Army and Air National Guard Logistic Programs.

"Colonel Beauman is a highly effective USPFO. She is competent, caring, and leads by example," Ommen said. "She is a professional who takes great pride in her service to country and state."

Beauman said her entire life since graduating from high school has centered on the military and has made her the person she is today.

"Everything in my life has been shaped by the military. Everything I've done since high school has centered around the military," she said. "Everything I am is the military and after three decades in uniform, the military has significantly shaped my life."

Beauman said service members join the military for a variety of reasons. She offered advice for anyone who is looking to make the military a career.

"Look beyond today," she said. "You have to understand where everything fits together. The military is a great career choice. It offers good benefits and is a good way to support a family. The military itself is a family and you will be surrounded by people who support you and have your back."

Spending 32 years in a career – civilian or

military – one will have a laundry list of things they will miss most. Beauman says she'll miss

the people she works with and the camaraderie of her fellow Soldiers.

"You make lifelong friendships and bonds with those you've served and have shared experiences with," she explained.

"That's what I'll miss the most."

Beauman says she'll also miss the network of her fellow USPFOs.

"The USPFOs are one of the best teams I've worked with," she said. "Being one of only 54 USPFOs, we are a tightknit group. No matter how small or insignificant your question is, you can always reach out to any one of them and someone will have an answer for you."

One of Beauman's most memorable experiences of her career include her promotion to lieutenant colonel in 2010, marking the first time her parents, husband and two sons were all able to attend a ceremony.

"It was great having my parents, husband and our two sons, able to attend," she said.

Beauman said the most memorable experience in her career happened when the 1144th Transportation Battalion returned from deployment in 2008. The unit was returning

from a yearlong deployment to Kuwait during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Soldiers were riding into Delevan, Illinois, on firetrucks and





the community lined the streets to welcome the troops home.

"My entire family was there," she said. "My mom made bright yellow sweatshirts for everyone and there they were, all lined up along the street as we pulled into town. It made for a great homecoming."

Beside Beauman along the journey has been her husband of 23 years and their two sons. Beauman said family support has been the catalyst driving her career.

"If my husband, Frank, and our two sons, Nathaniel and Matthew, didn't support my military career, I would not be retiring," she said. "I couldn't have stayed as a career without their support. I would have gotten out a long time ago."

Beauman said her military service impacted her family in some ways, but says her service also brought more structure in their lives as a

result.

"I've missed events, birthdays and anniversaries because of my military service. I've deployed and traveled in positions I've held," she said. "However, my husband was a stay-at-home dad and he provided that constant support so there wouldn't be as great an impact as a result of my service."

When one chapter closes, another one begins.

"The only thing on my list right now is retirement," she said. "Our youngest son is still in high school, so we'll wait to make future plans until he's in college. One thing we plan to do down the road is to move to somewhere warmer."



Ommen said he will miss Beauman's leadership in the USPFO community.

"I've had the opportunity to work with a number of leaders, both enlisted and officers over my 40 year military career. Colonel Beauman is one of the best officers I've had an opportunity to work with," Ommen said. "I wish Colonel Beauman the best as she retires from the military. She's a friend and I'll miss not having her as someone I can reach out to discuss a multitude of issues."





FAMILY MATTERS

After the fall of Kabul, the Guard helped one of their own get his family to safety

By Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

2007.07.06

Springfield, Ill. – In Stafford, Virginia, more than 7,000 miles from the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, an Illinois Army National Guard Soldier anxiously awaited reports on the status of his family as they made their way from Herat, Afghanistan to Kabul in August.

The ultimate goal was to get the Soldier's family inside the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul and aboard one of the flights leaving Afghanistan with Afghan refugees.

Thanks to the efforts of the Illinois National Guard, the National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C., and several agencies within the intelligence community, the family of 2nd Lt. Fahim Masoud, an intelligence officer assigned to Company D, 766th Brigade Engineer Battalion, based in Bloomington, Illinois, is now being processed and vetted at Quantico, Virginia.

"My family had no intention of leaving Afghanistan," Masoud said. "Once the Taliban started taking control of the country, I started getting quite worried."

Masoud said he was hesitant to reach out to Maj. Gen. Rich Neely, of Springfield, the

Adjutant General of Illinois and Commander of the Illinois National Guard, to ask if he would write a letter on his behalf as Taliban forces started capturing outlying areas as American troops began their withdrawal. But as the Taliban forces gained a stronger hold, Masoud contacted 1st Lt. Eileen Figueroa, of Springfield, Neely's Aide-de-Camp, for help in talking to Neely.

"I asked Lieutenant Figueroa if she thought Major General Neely would be willing to draft a letter for me, such as was done for me by the South Carolina National Guard's TAG," Masoud said. "She spoke with Major General Neely to get his thoughts and he was immediately supportive."

Neely said he didn't hesitate in writing a letter on Masoud's behalf.

"Lieutenant Masoud provided an invaluable service to the United States as a translator. He sought out that job and did it very well," Neely said. "I wrote the letter to attest to his good character and the invaluable work he has done for not only the Illinois National Guard but for the U.S. Armed Forces in hopes it would help in the process of moving his family to safety."

Masoud said Neely went above and beyond in writing the letter.

"Here I was, one of the most junior officers in the Illinois National Guard and he did this for my family," Masoud said.

Neely said that Masoud's story is one of a kind.

"Lieutenant Masoud has a unique story to tell," Neely said. "He worked as a translator for the U.S. military in Afghanistan, came to the United States to pursue educational opportunities and a dream to serve in the military, ultimately becoming a commissioned officer in the Illinois Army National Guard."

Neely's efforts to help Masoud extended far beyond writing a letter. Once the Afghan government fell and the Taliban took over, Neely sent a message to the Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson, Chief of the National Guard Bureau.

The message was then forwarded to others in an effort to help Masoud.

Masoud, who began working as an interpreter for the U.S. Army at age 17, came to the United States in 2007 to fulfill two dreams – an education and to serve in the U.S. military. His first dream became

reality when he graduated from Washington University in St. Louis. But it wasn't until 2019 that Masoud would fulfill his second dream by enlisting in the Illinois Army National Guard.

Masoud said his work with the U.S. Army as an interpreter, coupled with his status in the Illinois National Guard and his civilian job as an intelligence analyst placed his family in danger. But it wasn't until Kabul fell Aug. 15 that time became of the essence.

"They were in a safe house when Kabul was captured by the Taliban Aug. 15," Masoud said. "Agencies within the intelligence community thought it would hold longer. When it fell, we knew the time had come to act and get them

out."

Masoud said on Aug. 26 he was put in touch with Col. Amanda Evans, the executive officer for Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson, Chief of the National Guard Bureau.

"We talked a couple times a day with daily updates on what was going on in Afghanistan and the efforts to get my family out safely," Masoud said.

One morning, Masoud received an unexpected telephone call from Hokanson.

"He told me 'we're working on this situation'," Masoud said. "He said he knows the commanding general of the 82nd Airborne Division and they're on the ground in Kabul right now. That phone call really boosted my morale."

For the family to get out of Afghanistan, Masoud said they had to apply for the

Priority-2, or P-2, program.

"Priority 2 is a special designation granting U.S. Refugee Admissions Program access for certain Afghan nationals and their eligible family members," he said. "We were able to get my family's details sent to the U.S. Central

Command for the special designation."

On Aug. 26, Masoud said his family was in the general area of the suicide bomber which killed 13 U.S. service members and 170 Afghans.

"I was in nearly constant contact with my family and the intelligence community as they traveled through Kabul to the airport," he said. "I asked them to take selfies and send to me so I could pass along to the military and intelligence community. The plan was to locate them and get them inside the airport."

Masoud said he was monitoring reports coming from outside the airport as thousands of Afghan nationals gathered in a last effort to



escape certain extremely barbaric treatment by the Taliban.

"Even with a plan in place, my family didn't know if they would get into the airport," Masoud said. "When my family finally got to the airport, the State Department's rules had changed and they were only allowing green card holders, U.S. citizens and those holding a letter from at least a two-star general to enter the airport. The letter they had in their possession was from Major General Neely."

Masoud said the initial photos taken outside the airport showed how scared his family was, but photos taken after they were inside the airport, and aboard the C-17, showed a very happy, and relieved, family.

"It was like the weight of the world had been lifted off their shoulders," he said.

Masoud said it was teamwork that helped his family get out of Afghanistan.

"It was a collective effort from the Illinois National Guard, the National Guard Bureau and the intelligence community," Masoud said. "Each went above and beyond to help get my family out of Afghanistan."

Masoud's family was transported to Ramstein Air Base, in Germany, where they spent a couple of weeks before arriving in Washington, D.C. on Sept. 10.

"My family is extremely grateful," Masoud said. "My mother has a medical condition and those special cases received the medical care they need. They have been treated so kindly by the U.S. military."

Masoud said that for two to three weeks, resistance fighters battled the Taliban in Herat.

"They tried and died, taking the fight to the streets," Masoud said. "Once the Taliban took over in Kabul, society went through a radical transformation."

Masoud said his two younger siblings, both born after the U.S. arrived in Afghanistan in 2001, grew up under the security of the United States.

The return to Taliban rule has been very traumatic for them.

"Before the Taliban, they were free to travel and dress more liberally," he said. "Now it's obviously different for them and they didn't know what to do - they could only travel as a family and had to dress more conservatively."

Masoud said for his younger siblings, the future looks bright, as they begin a new life in the United States.

"I want them to become a version of me," he said. "I want them to join the military, whether full time or part time, and use the educational benefits, work hard and help the rest of the family to come to the United States."

Masoud said his story is special.

"I don't think there is any other service member who worked for the U.S. military as an interpreter, came to the United States to pursue a dream, and eventually join the military as an intelligence officer," said Masoud.

Neely said he hopes Masoud's family feels welcome as they make the United States their new home.

"America welcomed Lieutenant Masoud as a young man and offered him an opportunity to pursue a dream," Neely said. "I hope the United States will again be that beacon of hope to his family as they pursue their dreams."

Figueroa, whose own family immigrated to the United States, agrees.

"It was a pretty stressful time. As a person of color whose family immigrated to the United States, it was really hard not to feel so personally invested in Fahim's situation," she said. "And as a fellow human being, it was even harder to feel the desperation in someone's voice and not feel a personal obligation to help in any way I could, even if my efforts were small."

Once Masoud's family completes the vetting process, they will live with him, his wife and their children in Virginia.



Sherman Soldier promoted to Sgt. Major

By Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

Springfield, Ill. – Nicholaus Fordham, of Sherman, Illinois, was promoted to sergeant major in the Illinois Army National Guard, Sept. 16 at Joint Force Headquarters, Camp Lincoln, Springfield, Illinois.

Fordham enlisted in the Illinois Army National Guard in 1997 as a supply specialist in the 1644th Transportation Company, Rock Falls.



In 2004, Fordham accepted an Active Guard and Reserve position.

He has deployed twice, the first from 2004-2005 with the 1644th Transportation Company and again from 2020-2021 with the 232nd Combat

Support Sustainment Battalion.

"Nick is a very hard worker who puts in a lot of work to make sure the unit is successful," said Lt. Col. Sean Welker, of Pawnee, Illinois, former commander of the 232nd CSSB, and .

Fordham thanked friends and family for attending the promotion ceremony.

"I have been fortunate to serve alongside several knowledgeable Soldiers, many of who became my mentors," Fordham said. "Each of you here today have played a part in where I'm at today."

Fordham thanked his wife, Stephanie.

"You have sacrificed so much, juggling four children as I deployed and went to school," he said. "You are truly amazing and you are my glue."



Petersburg Soldier promoted to Master Sgt.

By Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

Springfield, Ill. – Illinois Army National Guard Soldier Matthew Harris, of Petersburg, Illinois, was promoted to Master Sergeant Sept. 16 at the Illinois State Military Museum, Springfield, Illinois.

"The master sergeant rank is like the shell of the pie. What you fill it up with is up to you," said Col. Ron Bonesz, Military Personnel Officer, Illinois Army National Guard. "I have no doubt if you keep going as you are, we will see a diamond and then a wreath and star in your future."



Harris enlisted in the ILARNG in 2000 as a Chemical Operations Specialist in the 233rd Military Police Company in Springfield. He entered the Active Guard and Reserve program in 2009 as the Readiness Non-commissioned Officer for Company N, Recruit Sustainment Program, Recruiting and Retention Battalion.

"I am excited to see what you can do. You have done a great job and I look forward to seeing your efforts over the next few years," Bonesz said.

Harris, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the Automation and Automated Records Branch, thanked friends and family for their support during his military service.

"To my wife and kids, thank you for being there the past 21 years," Harris said. "Many of you here today have been my mentors."

Harris said he looks forward to all the things the AARB will accomplish the next few years.

"The human to human contact of this job is what keeps me coming to work each day," Harris said.





INTO THE SUNSET

Lt. Col. Mike Landon, a “mustang” officer, retires after more than 30 years of service

By Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

Springfield, Ill. – After more than 34 years of service in the Illinois Army National Guard, Lt. Col. Roger M. “Mike” Landon, of Petersburg, Illinois, retired in a ceremony at Camp Lincoln, in Springfield, Illinois, Sept. 30.

“I knew serving in the Illinois National Guard would be a good experience. In 1988, when I went to Beardstown to pick up my ticket to basic training, I started my car and Eddie Money’s ‘Two Tickets to Paradise’ was playing on the radio,” Landon told family and friends at the ceremony. “I knew it had to be a good

sign. Basic training wasn’t quite paradise, but I have had a lot of great experiences and opportunities throughout the years.”

Landon enlisted in the Illinois Army National Guard in 1987, earning a direct

commission as a second lieutenant in 2004.

He has served in a variety of leadership positions including 126th Maintenance Company First Sergeant, 126th Maintenance Company Platoon Leader, 1844th Transportation Company Platoon Leader, 1744th Transportation Company executive officer,





Commander of the 3637th Maintenance Company, 232nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Support Operations officer and U.S. Property and Fiscal Office Supply and Services division chief.

"We've known each other for a long time," said Col. Brian Creech, of Petersburg, the U.S. Property and Fiscal Officer for Illinois. "You'll be greatly missed."

Creech thanked Landon's family, including wife, Tara, daughter, Marlee and sons, Kane and Brody, for sacrifices they made during Landon's career.



"You sacrificed during times when he was deployed," Creech said. "The Illinois National Guard greatly appreciates all you have done to

allow him to serve over the years."

Landon thanked his family for their support.

"I want to thank my parents for their support throughout the years and my wife, Tara, who made sure I didn't have to worry about things at home while I was away. She deserves as much credit as I for all I've done over the years," he said.

He also thanked members of the Illinois National Guard for opportunities extended to him and for the friends he made during his journey.

"I want to thank the leaders for the opportunities I've been offered the past 34 years," Landon said. "I also want to thank the Soldiers I've served with for their invaluable support."

Landon said serving in the Illinois National Guard was a hobby for the first few years until the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

"Before 9/11, we all went to drill and hung out with our buddies," Landon said. "We went to annual training and extended annual training. But 9/11 happened and things got serious."

Landon said early in his career, many of the senior Soldiers in his unit were Vietnam veterans.

"They had all this knowledge and wisdom," he said. "I thought we'd never be as good as these guys. Over the years I came to realize the guys I was serving with were a great group of Soldiers."

Landon credits the events of Sept. 11, 2001 for the transformation.

"We all took a step forward when things got bad. We all went through the training and we got ready for what was to come," he said. "Our Soldiers stepped up to any challenge facing us."

He said the difference between the reserve component and the active duty military is what the reserve forces brings to the table.

"Our Soldiers within our ranks bring so many other skills to the table," he said. "When asked for a specific skill set, oftentimes, we can fill that request from someone within our ranks."

Landon's farewell message was simple.

"This is an outstanding organization with outstanding people," he said. "I'm glad I got to be a part of it for so long."

OUR HOUSE

182nd opens the door on its new fire house

By Master Sgt. Lealan Beuhrer, 182nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs



Military leaders, legislative representatives and contractors met at the General Wayne A. Downing Peoria International Airport for the opening of the 182nd Airlift Wing's new Crash, Fire, Rescue Station in Peoria, Illinois, Oct. 5, 2021. The \$7.9 million, nearly 18,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility will ensure the fire department is able to effectively perform its military mission and also continues to provide service to the airport and surrounding community for years to come.



ROUNDS COMPLETE

122nd Field Artillery wraps up at Dynamic Front 21

Courtesy story by Daniela Vestal, 7th Army Training Command



POLATLI TRAINING AREA, Turkey. –

Dynamic Front 21 came to close Sept. 20, 2021, as the last of the Soldiers from the Illinois Army National Guard began packing their gear and getting ready for the trip back to the U.S. from the Polatli Training Area in Turkey that served as their home for the last month.

“I am extremely proud of the Soldiers in our battalion for everything they accomplished throughout this exercise and all the hard work that went into the preparation for it,” said Lt. Col. Justin Kramer, battalion commander, 2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery Regiment, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Illinois National Guard. “We accomplished the goals of this exercise and met our training objectives. This primarily included interoperability and

communication between fire support platforms with our allies. The phenomenal cooperation enacted by our allies enabled sharing of information and best practices throughout the exercise. It was an honor to be the first National Guard unit hosted by Turkey for a NATO

exercise and their hospitality went above and beyond.”

The Soldiers are part of a second phase of Dynamic Front 21, which was added this year to allow the exercise to expand for the first time into Turkey. The move to add a training location in Turkey was doubly significant as Dynamic Front 21 brought the NATO Allied Land Command’s commander to serve as the exercise’s senior trainer.

“This exercise is critical to building the readiness and interoperability amongst





NATO allied and partner land forces, and executing a second iteration allows us to expand our scope of training,” said Lt. Gen. Rodger L. Cloutier, commander of NATO’s Allied Land Command in a press release about the exercise. “I’m excited to have these forces shooting, moving, and

communicating together in Turkey, the host nation of NATO Allied Land Command, for the first time in Dynamic Front history.”

Dynamic Front first began as a small artillery-fires exercise at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, in 2016. The next year saw the exercise expand dramatically with participation from nine allied nations and focus a portion of the training on the integration of the Artillery Systems Cooperation Activities – a series of protocols that digitally link the artillery systems of ASCA-member nations for seamless execution of fires missions.

In the six years and five iterations since its start, Dynamic Front 20 having been canceled due to COVID-19 global pandemic, the exercise has grown to see more than 30



nations participate in locations that now span five locations in four countries across Europe – Grafenwoehr Training Area and Weisbaden, Germany; Torun Training Area, Poland; Adazi Training Area, Poland and Polatli Training Area, Turkey.

“Dynamic Front has progressed every single year,” said Col. Peter Sittenauer, exercise director for Dynamic Front 21 and chief of fires for U.S. Army Europe and Africa. “As we continue to work on interoperability, we learn more and we have a firmer idea of where we want to get to in the next round.”

This year’s Dynamic Front focused on U.S., allied and partner nations training together to build capacity along the three tenets of interoperability – human, procedural and technical– while developing solutions to gaps and limitations in the theater fires complex, multi-echelon fires and improving interoperability at the tactical level.

“Every time we do this, it reassures us - going back to our exercise objectives - how important Dynamic Front is,” said Sittenauer. “There is no other exercise we do within U.S. Army Europe and Africa, amongst the alliance, that is so focused on ensuring that we are continuing to develop a theater-wide enterprise amongst the alliance. As we do this Dynamic Front, we are identifying things we need to do next year and we create more challenging exercises to make us more ready, more resilient and more interoperable.”



LCA Staff members receive Illinois Medal of Merit

By Michael Camacho, Lincoln's Challenge Academy Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois – Seven staff members with Lincoln's ChalleNGe Academy received the Illinois Military Medal of Merit on Sept. 24 at the LCA campus in Rantoul Illinois.

Jaime Eaker of Rantoul, deputy director of programs, Eric Strigotte of Mahomet, LCA commandant, Norma Schmidt of Mahomet, medical department supervisor, Damon Graham of Danville and Willonte Campbell-Williams of Rantoul, cadre shift supervisors, Jared Spencer of Rantoul, instructor, Tammy Martin of Philo, logistics assistant and Michael Camacho of Rantoul, public relations specialist received the Illinois National Guard's third highest award.

The group was recognized for their volunteer service in support of Cadets in the five-month residential program when the COVID-19 pandemic affected the academy and roughly 70 Cadets tested positive for the virus from Oct. 10 to Nov. 6, 2020.

"During the pandemic, we stayed vigilante and did our best to limit any chance of exposure of COVID," said LCA Director Michael Haerr of Eureka, Illinois. "Unfortunately, on Oct. 10 of 2020 we had positive cases and within the next few days, there were more. The day it happened we moved them to isolation and immediately we had staff volunteering to work on that quarantine floor. These staff put the needs of the Cadets before their own health and safety."

Haerr said the volunteer staff took different roles such as cadre, medical support, and supervise to watch and care for the Cadets.

"Our medical team was reporting the cadets' symptom, temperatures, and health to the Champaign Urbana Public Health District daily, and monitoring temperatures taken several times a daily. Deputy Eaker and Ms. Schmidt

were routinely communicating with cadets parents and guardians on the status of positive cadets and when they were released for routine activities. Commandant Strigotte and the Cadre Shift Leaders were ensuring daily schedules and operation and the temporary cadre were on the frontlines with these Cadets 24/7 during their quarantine."

Haerr said it was their support was vital to the success of the Cadets of Class 55-20 affected by the pandemic.

"We were a month from graduation and there are several things that needed to happen to ensure the Cadets graduate and are on the path to success," said Haerr.

"Our staff ensured those requirements were met and the progress of Cadets on the isolation floor were not slowed down."

Jaime Eaker, deputy director of programs said the group of volunteers, in addition to monitoring their health and symptoms, were responsible for the Cadet's day activities, education, job

placement, life skills training, and keeping them motivated and engaged.

"We set up a distance learning room where our instructors were able to video in and teach lessons, our staff was assisting with job search and placement activity whether research or setting up job interviews on the phone

or zoom," said Eaker. "They were on the floor tutoring and making sure once the Cadets were done with quarantine they would be able to get to their teams and not be behind on graduation requirements."

Eaker said the COVID quarantine floor was active for approximately 30 days. Class 55-graduated in two groups with the first completing the program on Nov. 7 and the second on Nov. 21.

"As staff members, our priorities are to the success of the Cadets and their futures," said Eaker. "Our volunteer staff played a vital role in making sure our Cadets stayed on track, they put their own wellbeing aside and made sure the Cadets were safe and be ready to succeed."



ILNG wraps up vaccination mission across Illinois

By Barb Wilson, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois – Nearly eight months after being activated by Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker, the Illinois National Guard ended its COVID-19 vaccination mission Sept. 10.

“Since day one, the Illinois National Guard has played a vital role in the effort to control the spread of this deadly virus,” said Maj. Gen. Rich Neely, the Adjutant General of Illinois and Commander of the Illinois National Guard. “I’m proud of our Guard women and men as they stepped up to the plate to help our fellow citizens.”

The ILNG’s vaccination mission began Jan. 25 and during that time approximately 1,300 Soldiers and 470 Airmen served on the frontlines of the state’s COVID-19 vaccination response operations. The Soldiers and Airmen provided almost 1.9 million vaccinations throughout Illinois at state supported mass vaccination sites and as part of mobile vaccination teams. The Illinois National

Guard provided 13.3 percent of Illinois’ 14.1 million total vaccinations. National Guard-wide, Illinois’ Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen provided 14.1 percent of the 13.2 million total vaccinations given nationwide through

National Guard missions.

The Illinois National Guard set up, manned and operated state supported vaccination sites across the state in partnership with the Illinois Department of Public Health and Illinois Emergency Management Agency and local health departments. Mobile vaccination teams operated throughout the state in conjunction with local health departments scheduling vaccination clinics.

Overall, the Illinois National Guard supported the vaccination mission in 71 of Illinois’ 102 counties at 639 vaccine locations in 241 communities.

During the first phase of the COVID-19 response operations, the Illinois National Guard operated community-based testing sites when they first opened in March 2020. From March until the testing site mission ended in July 2020, more than 250,000 COVID-19 tests were administered.



THIS DAY IN HISTORY

August

4 Powers earns Distinguished Service Cross

1918: As American and British forces prepared for an assault on Albert, France. They realized control of roads in Albert allowed the allies to move supplies into the Somme Offensive combat zone. The 131st Infantry, entrenched outside the town, needed intelligence on enemy strength. On his own accord, Sgt. James B. Powers of Company L went forward, alone, to accomplish this task. Though harassed by enemy snipers the whole way, he successfully made it through the town and to allied forces dug in on the other side. His reconnaissance provided valuable information that benefited the commanders. For his coolness under fire in accomplishing his mission he received the Distinguished Service Cross. The Third Battle of Albert began on August 21, and within a day of hard fighting the allies had achieved victory.

8 Spc. Brandon Ramsey

2003: Spc. Brandon Ramsey of 21, of Calumet City, Illinois, was killed a vehicle accident in Tallil, Iraq while in pursuit of a suspicious vehicle during convoy security operations. Ramsey was assigned to the 933d Military Police Company based in Chicago.



12 106th Cavalry Group closes Falaise Pocket in Normandy

1944: With the tide turning in the Battle of Normandy, the allies trapped over 100,000 Germans near the French town of Falaise. During the desperate retreat of the Germans, the 106th Cavalry Group, attached to XV Corps, provided reconnaissance by screening the towns of Alecon, Nogent, Dreux, Sarthe, and Mantes Gassicourt. The allies bombarded the Pocket from the ground and the air for nine days, killing 15,000 as well as destroying 344 tanks, 252 guns, and 2,447 trucks and other vehicles. Fifty-thousand Germans made it out of the Pocket, and another 50,000 were captured.



23 Task Force Able Sentry
1997: As part of Task Force Able Sentry, the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Macedonia, twenty-one Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation voluntarily deployed to the border of Macedonian and Serbia. During the 270-day deployment, the air crews flew numerous missions, and continued their extensive flight training. The small contingent of the 106th returned to state control on February 27th, 1998.



29 Illinois Activated for Hurricane Katrina Support

2005: In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, one of the most destructive natural disasters in U.S. history, over 1,400 Illinois National Guard Soldiers

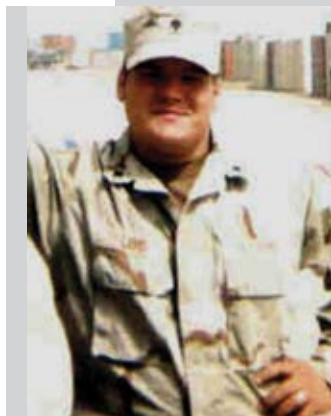


headed south to aid in the recovery efforts. The units included the 232nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Springfield; 33rd Area Support Group, Chicago; Headquarters and Headquarters Company 2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery, Chicago; Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery, Sycamore; Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery, Robbins; Headquarters and Headquarters Company 634th Brigade Support Battalion, Sullivan; Company A, 634th Brigade Support Battalion, Mattoon; Company B, 634th Brigade Support Battalion, Champaign; Company C, 634th, Brigade Support Battalion, Springfield; 3637th Maintenance Company, Springfield.

September

5

Spc. Charles Lamb and Sgt. Shawna Morrison



2004: Spc Charles Lamb, 23, of Casey, Illinois, and Sgt. Shawna Morrison, 26, of Paris Illinois, both died from wounds sustained during a mortar attack in Baghdad, Iraq. Both Soldiers were assigned to the 1544th Transportation Company based in Paris, Illinois.

11

20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks

2021: Sept. 11, 2021 marked the 20th anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in 2001. The following 20 years saw the Illinois National Guard deploy thousands of troops to many lands, home and abroad, in support of contingency operations such as New Dawn, Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom, Noble Eagle, Inherent Resolve, Freedom's Sentinel, and Resolute Support. To date the Illinois National Guard has had 34 casualties as a result of operations following the 9/11 attacks.



17

Sgt. Joshua Harris and Staff Sgt. Jason Vazquez



2008: Sgt. Joshua Harris, 21, of Romeoville, Illinois, and Staff Sgt. Jason Vazquez, 24, of Chicago, died of wounds suffered when the vehicle they were in struck an improvised explosive device in Gerdia Seria, Afghanistan. Both men were assigned to B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery Regiment based in Robbins, Illinois.

28

The 370th Infantry battled for control of three French towns during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive

1918: On the third day of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the 370th Infantry received orders to secure the French towns of Mont des Singes, Guilleminet Farm, and Ferme de la Riviere. Pvt. William E. Cuff took part in the fighting at Mont des Singes with the 2nd Machine Gun Company. Heavy German artillery fire cost him his life as he served dutifully as a regimental runner. He received a posthumous Distinguished Service Cross. Private James Fuquay of Company A received the same honor for selfless actions at Guilleminet Farm. Though wounded in the arm and under unrelenting small arms fire, he disassembled his jammed Browning automatic rifle and cleaned it. He refused medical aid, completed the cleaning of his weapon, and returned fire until passing out from loss of blood. The third Distinguished Service Cross of the day went to First Lieutenant William J. Warfield of Company L at Ferme de la Riviere. While leading an attack his platoon became separated from the rest of the company. He organized his men, and continued the attack against enemy machine-gun nests. Though severely wounded, he charged one of the nests, killed the crew, and captured the gun. He astonished his men further by refusing medical attention to continue on another attack.

**THE PRAIRIE SENTINEL
1301 NORTH MACARTHUR BOULEVARD
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62702**

**DSN: 555-3569
PHONE: (217) 761-3569
FAX: (217) 761-2988**

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